

Scabies

Fact Sheet



Maine Center for Disease
Control and Prevention

An Office of the
Department of Health and Human Services

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What is Scabies?

Scabies is a skin infestation with the microscopic mite *sarcoptes scabiei*.

How is Scabies spread?

Scabies spreads by direct, prolonged, skin to skin contact with an infested person. Infestation is easily spread to sexual partners and household members.

What are the signs and symptoms of Scabies?

- Pimple-like irritations, burrows or rash of the skin, especially the webbing between the fingers; the skin folds on the wrist, elbow, or knee; the penis, the breast, or shoulder blades
- Intense itching, especially at night and over most of the body
- Sores on the body caused by scratching. These sores can sometimes become infected with bacteria
- For a person who has never been infested with scabies, symptoms may take 4-6 weeks to begin. For a person who has had scabies before, symptoms appear within several days.

How is Scabies diagnosed?

Diagnosis is most commonly made by looking at the burrows or rash. Identification of scybala (mite eggs/feces) from a skin scraping may be used for confirmation.

How is Scabies treated?

Several creams and lotions are available by prescription. These should be applied from the neck down to the toes, left on for the recommended amount of time, and then washed off. Added attention to the fingernails is suggested. Always follow the directions provided. All clothing, bedding and towels should be washed and dried on the HOT setting. Itching may last for 2-3 weeks after an effective treatment.

Did I get scabies from my pet?

No. Pets become infested with a different kind of mite. Those mites can cause itching and skin

irritation in humans for a few days, but they do not cause scabies.

What about work and daycare?

Scabies can cause outbreaks in settings where close contact is common (i.e. hospitals, long term care facilities, day cares). Prolonged contact is necessary for transmission. Exclusion for infected individuals is recommended for 24 hours after treatment. Patients in a hospital and residents in a long term care facility with suspected scabies should be placed on contact precautions. Close contacts of these patients should wear gowns and gloves for 24 hours after effective therapy has begun.

How common is Scabies?

Scabies infestation is common and found worldwide. Scabies affects all races and socioeconomic groups.

Where can I get more information?

For more information contact your healthcare provider or local health center. You can also contact the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention by calling 1-800-821-5821. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website - <http://www.cdc.gov> - is another excellent source of health information.

References

CDC website -

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